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native, and, if necessary, foreign masters, to be elected by the pupils who should never exceed a certain fixed number, in order to preserve a high standard.

A special fund would be established to the discovery of new talents, and the assistance of poor art students.

Prizes would be awarded to those pupils who receive the most honorable mentions during the year. Winners of the National Prizes would receive an annual allowance for four years during which time they may visit Europe or select the course they think best to broaden their views and perfect their technique.

Special features of the Academy would be

1. Several hundred square acres of land adjoining the Academy, with pasture ground, forest land, lakes etc., cattle and household animals.

2. A menagery.

3. Trained models (who are capable of wearing historical costumes, of showing facial expression etc.)

4. Chemical laboratory for the fabrication of colors.

5. A collection of costumes, armory etc.

6. A theatre for ideal, musical and dramatic performances.

7. Lectures by experts on all subjects relating to art.

III. National Museum of Fine Arts which would contain

1. A collection of masterpieces of modern and ancient art.

2. Reproductions of the masterpieces of sculpture of all nations and all times in the original material. (To be copied by the prize winners of the academy).

3. Copies of the masterpieces of paintings of all nations and all times. (To be copied by the prize winners of the Academy).

4. Architectural models of famous structures of all nations and all times, in cork etc. Architecture details of the different periods in plaster.

(Lists of desirable copies will be printed in one of the following numbers.)

5. Library containing the art publications of all nations and all times, and a choice collection of hand-books, encyclopædas, etc.,

6. Print Department with special consideration of modern and American art.

Museums of Fine Arts on a smaller scale to be established in all larger cities (for which a more detailed treatment of certain periods of art would be advisable).

NOTES ON THE FIN DE SIECLE MOVEMENT IN PARISIAN ART AND LITERATURE.

Paris, today, is still the centre of art life, despite the fact that only in sculpture France can boast of artistic supremacy over other nations, (excepting Italy); while in painting for instance, Germany can show by far stronger personalities. Where is there in France a Lenbach, a Menzel, a Gabriel Max, a Boecklin, an Uhde, or a Max Klinger?

This great influence of Parisian art can perhaps be traced to the pronounced decorative taste of the French people, which, originated under Louis XIV. — whose generous art patronage was exercised less for the glorification of the muses than to beautify the comforts of the ceremonious court life in the most lavish way and to throw gold dust over every pleasure that appealed to the senses — and which became still softer, more frivolous, and more enticing under Louis XV.

This decorative tendency reveals itself in everything pertaining to Paris, in its architecture, its long lighted avenues, as well as its gastronomical perfections, or the coquettish grace with which the simplest shop girl lifts her skirts.

Paris is the beloved mistress of France, no glittering jewel is considered too precious, no exotic flower too rare to adorn her and make her the proudest beauty among European cities.

Go to Trafalgar Square, London; Unter den Linden, Berlin; Newsky Prospect, St. Petersburg; to the Piazza of St. Peter, Rome; then return to Place de la Concorde, the Champs Elysées, the Avenue de l'Opera and judge yourself if it is not the most luminous city in the world. In other places you might find brightness, in Paris you find light!

For the city of Notre Dame can offer you everything: science, art, literature, society, politics, religion. Wherever the artistic mind may turn it finds an inspiration or, at least, a suggestion; everyone of its streets has been rendered sacred by history or the reminiscences of great men; every type of its population has been sung by its poets or described by its novelists. These writers have succeeded as in no other city, in classifying the most sacred as well as the most trifling phases of Parisian life and by so doing have gilded and idealized their own existences. To this must be added the admiring confidence of the Frenchmen in their own artistic abilities in preference to all others and the patronage of the

government which adds year by year a new jewel to the diadem of native art.

And in this city lives a cosmopolitan population; panting for pleasure, never tired of drinking from the overflowing chalice of joy, a population that, in its covetous search for new diversions has developed a taste for the sensational, the morbid, and the atrocious, without any consideration whether it be vulgar, immoral or sacreligious, as for instance, in the case of a café where the waitresses were dressed like sisters of charity.

The fin-de-siècle Frenchmen prefer a cripple to a well built man, a dissolute wench to a domestic woman; they love the full blown, fading flowers, the over-ripe fruit, the production of hothouse and artificial breeding. And if they do not go so far as to openly admire crime, they at least show a morbid curiosity for it, the judge and lawyers in expectancy of an interesting case, the journalist, anxious to fabricate a sensational article, and the public simply to disperse their ennui.

Is it not strange, by the way, that French art has not for decades produced a pure simple child like the children of Henschel or those of Auerbach's novels. Parisian children are always blasé. (In my own experience a little girl of four expressed the desire to marry me to her nurse.)

Vice parades in the streets. Tragedies of conjugal life are daily enacted. The demi monde renders every place unsafe for respectable people. The cancan has again come into fashion, dry goods stores do marvelous business in lace and hosiery, Mabilie is restored in Moulin Rouge and the Casino. (Not long ago I witnessed the spectacle of a young handsomely dressed woman, slightly intoxicated, dancing the cancan in full midday before a café in the rue Soufflet in the shadows of the sombre Panthéon.)

And beneath this rich wanton life with the clang of its music and the tumult of its dances, French art is undergoing a transformation. The young artist of the present generation resembles Berthold Schwartz, who tried to transform vulgar material into gold and produced an explosion of gunpowder instead.

The modern French artist has become a cosmopolitan, and finds much of his inspiration in foreign art. He admires the endless melodies and the color sounds of modern music, the impressionistic tendency of Wagner's librettos. He sympathises with the nocturnal sybarite life of the last ideal King Ludwig II., he praises the grotesque

delicacy of Japanese art, studies with Ibsen and Strindberg the ever fiercer growing struggle between the two sexes, discusses the social problem of America, and smilingly approves of the renovation of Christianity by Count Tolstoj, the cobbler-missionary of Tula.

A very clear insight into Parisian life is gained by the stranger (if he should stay long enough in the capital to make some social studies), in observing a certain number of personalities who at once attract his attention by their grotesque and often affected originality.

One of these is Count d'Hausonville, the grandson of Madame de Staël, one of the bluest bloods of the Faubourg St. Honoré who, in the evening, puts on his immaculate linen, his evening dress of faultless cut, and with a gardenia in his buttonhole, diamond studs, and gloves of most fashionable hue, guides his steps towards the slums, brushes through narrow aisles, steps over dirty courtyards, climbs rickety stairs to visit the sick and poor, to pick up orphaned children and forsaken new-born babes, or find shelter and suitable occupations for homeless girls.

Another example of Parisian eccentricity is Maxime Lisbonne, the charlatan Communist who drives through the city selling "revolutionary" fried potatoes to the mob, in a carriage moved by electricity, or in a little stage coach, drawn by a team of ponies, with a coachman dressed like a postillion. He has repeatedly opened a *Taverne de Bague*, where the waiters were dressed like jailbirds, with chains and iron balls encumbering their feet, where the walls were decorated with the portraits of convicts transported to New Caledonia, and where every evening at nine a guillotine execution of a wax figure took place. Lisbonne has besides acted and sung in variety shows, called himself the colonel of the Commune, edited papers, and founded an insurance company for dynamite explosions.

A third fin de siècle type is Yvette Guilbert, the variety songstress par excellence, whose eccentricity of dress and recitative has been commented upon all over the world. She was introduced to the Parisian public by the journalist, Hugues Le Roux, in a public lecture, attended by a most aristocratic audience, in which he described her as a "female faun," and asserted that she was the living embodiment of fin de siècle. Who has seen that tall, lean, vulgar-shaped woman, with her red frizzled hair, her long black gloves, her long narrow deco-

llete almost reaching to the waist, and has not been baffled by the obtrusive manner in which she sings of the night life of Paris with all its wanton extravagances and criminal perversities? As she renders them with such striking naturalness in her otherwise unmelodious voice many a spectator involuntarily turns his head, believing for a moment that he is on the boulevard de Lavilette, or in the thief's den of Chateau Rouge.

The most interesting of all, however, is Paul Verlaine, the Parisian beggar poet, the Villon of the XIX century, an odd mixture of a criminal, religious fanatic, and songsmith. Dressed in a long greasy coat, and a red handkerchief around his neck, resembling a street singer, he has become a typical figure to all artists and literati of the modern school. After dissipating an inherited fortune, and living an unhappy married life, he has been leading the existence of a vagabond and pauper, assisted pecuniarily by a few admirers. When he has money he goes from brasserie to brasserie, and drinks one rum or absinthe after the other till his last sou is spent. Then awakening from this paroxysm with a temporary disgust of all alcoholic drinks he hies himself to some hospital, lies down before its entrance, and waits until he is picked up by the officials, who know him well, and generally give him shelter for a few weeks, and thus "one of the greatest lyrical poets of France" has written his best poetry among the sick and dying. Paul Verlaine, is one of the few who will outlive the literary anarchy of the year 1880-1900.

Early in the eighties a number of young literati, among others Maurice Rollinat, Emile Goudeau, Edmond Haraucourt, found a literary circle, called Les Hydropathes and Nevropathes, and held their meetings in a cellar café on the Quai St. Michel. In 1884, being considerably increased in numbers, they changed their headquarters to the Cafe Francois I, boulevard St. Michel adopted the name of Décadents (under the leaderships of Paul Verlaine) and later on Symbolists (under Stéphane Mallarmé); within the last ten years they have produced other sects, such as the Instrumentists (René Ghil), the Magnifiques, (Jean Paul Roux,) the Romanists (Jean Moréas), the Magiques, the Poètes Français, (represented by a single member Charles Morice), the Neo-Décadents, and Neo-Symbolists, etc.

It is difficult to define the authetical aim of this literary anarchy, termed by some the freemasonry of fools. It is not so much a reaction against naturalism as a chaotic combination of the most antipodal theories in art, always with a strong tendency

towards the symbolization of the commonplaces of life by means of medieval mysticism, and virtuoso-like effects of technique. They delight in analysis of all psychological phenomena, and at times their always melliflous but hopelessly obscure and illogical language becomes a mere alliteration and association of thought, as in the case of Arthur Rimbaud, Maeterlinck, etc. Perhaps the most important feature of this school is an endeavor to invest words, by all manner of experiments, with the qualities of color, sound or perfume. This eccentricity dates from Baudelaire (who borrowed it from Poe, and Poe from Hoffmann) who suggested in several poems that sounds could be heard, and that words could be made to exhale perfume.

This, however, is not as absurd as it may seem at sight. Natural science continues to make rapid strides. Prof. Wundt's psychometrical experiments to measure the time required by our own senses to realize color, light, etc., by means of a chronoscop, excite as much interest in our days as Prof. Helmholtz's measurements of the vibrations of violin strings did some years ago. No keen observer will doubt that a gorgeous sunset is capable of producing an effect on our system similar to that of a piece of violent music, why not then the tumult of colors on a canvass? Nor is it possible to deny after reading Zola, that combinations of words can convey the odor of a black alley, a laundry, or a cheese store.

It must be added that a large number of these writers have succeeded in writing a French which none but themselves can understand. They are continually employed in mutual admiration, in referring to and interpreting one another's books and as these do not find a very ready market, they present them to each other.

All these influences were palpable in the last Salon Exhibitions.

On entering the French salons with their 2,000 or 3,000 pictures of which scarcely half a dozen will be known in the history of art, we find ourselves surrounded by nudities of every description and in every position, classical, renaissance, and modern; decorative, sensual, and vulgar, often embellished with spots of scarlet and vermilion blood, as the genre féroce has become even more fashionable with the really ferocious Rochegrosse than it was with Constant and Regnault.

The eye searches in vain for a resting place and we would gladly escape from this monotony of flesh and blood to the Bois de Boulogne. Having come to study fine arts, however, we turn our attention to the other pictures, among which several immense landscapes are conspicuous. Are the authors of

these creations color-blind? Do they think the art of painting consists merely in emptying their tubes on the canvasses, and mixing the colors into landscapes with a pallet knife? (And yet in spite of your idiosyncracies, followers of Claude Monet, painting owes you some gratitude, inasmuch as you have heightened the key of color and abolished a great deal that was unnecessarily conventional!) Finding among all these representations of models and color schemes but little sentiment and less idea, we pass on to the religious paintings, which have been very predominant within the last years. Over sixty Christs have made their appearance, each picture bearing an individuality of its own (for instance, a crucifixion with a view of Paris instead of Jerusalem), though they all remind us of Uhde. Here Christ is impersonated by a tall, thin Norwegian who looks like an anarchist, there by a disagreeable looking loafer who resembles a maniac. Both of course wear halos. Now he is exhibited among peasants in a cottage interior, then again among society people in a fashionable salon, in a third case among school children in the Jardin de Luxembourg, or even in the company of a Pierrot on the stage of life. Christ is generally represented wearing the traditional white drapery, though he has occasionally donned Japanese and other grotesque costumes.

A still deeper insight into the leading peculiarities of contemporary French art may be gained at Durand Ruel's gallery in the rue Lafitte where the Impressionists have found a permanent shelter, where the Neo-Impressionists and the Archaists congregate, where the Tachists, who stipple their pictures like lithographs their Christmas cards, wait for immortality, and where the latest craze, the exhibition of the Rosecruceans, showed the public on what strange paths art may wander in this age:—

There one can see pictures of laborers and peasants as lean and long as the figures of the Pre Raphælités, living in houses and surrounded by objects, that seem to have been spiritualized by making them frail and almost transparent looking. Vulgar looking Camilles, apparently rolling about in cabbage fields or promenading about with lilies or burning hearts in their hands and of course a halo around their heads, stare at the perplexed writer from all sides. Medieval scenes, overcrowded with monsters and allegorical emblems, are also considered up to date if adequately modernized. Some of the canvasses look like huge dirty pallets, while others remind one of stained glass windows, or illustrations betraying an unconscious affinity to William Blake.

One of the leading attractions were the exhibits of Trachsel, a Swiss artist, who has repeatedly asserted in interviews and newspaper articles that his children are living on the planet Saturnus and have informed him that they will soon be ordered to some other planet. He endeavors to express human emotions by means of architectural designs. But the little structures looking like Swiss cottages and children's toys which he calls "abodes of joy;" or his "tower of darkness," represented by a round tower with two peepholes, are too ridiculous to be considered seriously.

Sar Joséphin M. Péladan, the founder of this school was hitherto only known as a sensational novelist, (the delight of the old boulevardiers) but in spring 1892 he suddenly appeared in satin garments, hair and beard dressed in Assyrian fashion, and ingeniously asserted that he was the descendant of the Assyrian king Mérodach Beladan and was determined to save art from utter degeneration by leading it back to religion. He found an unexpected supporter in Melchior de Vogue who was writing philosophic essays on the Neo Christian movement and soon afterwards a backer in the young duke de la Rochefoucauld, still remembered in Parisian society as the clown of the amateur circus, that was was fashionable a few years ago. They considered it necessary to found an order which they called Rose + Croix, without any special reason, and arranged an exhibition the opening of which was preceded by a mass at the Notre Dame, attended by the exhibitors who wore the emblem of the order in their buttonholes.

It is interesting to observe how these young artists are seconded in all their doings by the journalists, who take a delight in discovering new talents or putting mediocrity on a level with the best productions of art.

So it is with Chéret, the designer par excellence of theatrical posters, who tries to raise the price for his original designs or even posters out of print to such extravagant figures that it would be impossible to buy a complete collection of his posters for less than one million francs. Also Willette, the most elegantly frivolous of modern draughtsmen, who is famous for his cats, pierrots, wind-mills, skeletons and little women who lift their skirts exceedingly high, that decorate the walls of the Chat Noir, (where the waiters are dressed like members of the Academy,) has been largely overestimated, by his admirers as well as by himself.

But the most curious and perhaps most striking

representative of the temporary derangement of French art, is to be met with in a little insignificant book store near the Bibliothèque Mazarin — which contains a collection of the etchings of Félicien Rops, another artist who adopted art by chance after dissipating a considerable fortune. The amateur soon developed into an etcher, whose elegant frontispieces for books were greatly sought after. When his artistic and financial success was insured he began to follow a peculiar taste, that has, in the run of years, found many admirers, and his name is now on the lips of all who keep up with modern ideas.

Nobody has ever dared to represent the *vita sexualis* with such boldness, viracity and gloomy energy, and, with a furia which is worthy of Goya, who is said to have painted with foaming lips. In spite of their grotesque wantonness his compositions are executed with a refinement and refinement of technique to equal which we must go back to the XVIII century. Some of his etchings like "Satan sowing Inebriation" are masterpieces of imaginative work. It represents an immense tall and lean figure, a mixture of Satan and Death, strewn with a movement full of energy (that reminds one of Millet's "The Sewer") little cupids over Paris, with its myriads of houses on either side of the winding Seine. One of the monster's feet rests on the Opera, the other on the Notre Dame Church. Other samples of his work are mere symbolic representations of what the scientists call Paranoia, erotica and religiosa.

In his "Useless and Harmful Works" he has created a world for himself, peopled with lean, sickly and yet abnormally developed cupids, young girls with the abandon look of Chaplin dressed merely in corsets, scarfs, hats and hosiery, old roués in evening dress with the legs of fauns; women in love with statues; an indecent crowd of abnormal beasts, old hags, and devils with enormous wings, monsters that are half women and half skeletons with the skulls of long beaked birds as heads.

Nobody has depicted all the stigmata of degeneration so vividly except it were the symbolist poet Maurice Rollinat, who revels in sickness, death, and putrefaction, and combines the horrors of anxietymania with the aberrations of sexual psychopathy.

The titles in his volume of poems called *Les Névroses* (i. e. nervous diseases) is probably the most horrible and disgusting collection to be found in literature.

Some of the titles are "Buried Alive," "Tropp-

mann's Monologue" (a well known eightfold murderer), "The Mad Hangman," "The Monster," "The Maniac," "Headache," "The Dead Eyes," "Mademoiselle Squelette," "The Slow Death Struggle," "The Death Knell," "The Song of the Beheaded," etc.

Nothing is more offensive to healthy taste than vulgar indecency associated with religious subjects, as shown by Rops in his etchings "La Messe Noire" and "L'Amante du Christ," and by Huysmans, one of the most powerful and talented of the younger writers, in his satanic "Lá Bas." Such aberrations must be seen and read, or rather studied, in order to fathom the miry depths into which the luring will-o-the-wisps of fin de siècle art can lead us.

Works of art which merely depict the relation of the sexes, however palpable and obtrusive, are considered stupidly moral. It is only when everything sacred is associated with the vices of Sodom and Lesbos, the horrors of Bluebeard's castle and the Lycanthropy of the "godlike" Marquis de Sade that the up-to-date Parisian feels satisfied. In order that a book or a painting should become fashionable, it must exhale the aroma of boudoirs or sacristies, and expose a mysticism which is a combination of the ancient rites of occultism, esoterism, and magic and modern hypnotism, telepathy and sonambulism.

This perversity of taste threatens to spread among the intellectual of other countries, not so much for the great influence which Parisian art has always exercised as for an affinity of ideas, that can be met with everywhere. One has only to study the young Scandinavian writers, Strindberg, Arne Garborg, Ola Hansson; the Verist's literature in Italy, the Jungdeutschen in Germany and similar efforts in Russia, England, Spain, not only in poetry but art and music as well, to appreciate that it is as important a movement as that of the *Weltschmerz* literature produced about the same time by Byron in England, Heine in Germany, Musset in France, Pushkin in Russia, Leopardi in Italy, and Poe in America.

And people who have recognized this fact are very apt to argue the question: Is another catastrophe like that of 1792 in the air?"

This may seem far fetched, but would a social revolution at the end of this century really be such a great surprise to us? Two historic events, the clerical revolution in the 16th century and the French have taught us to expect something when the rich and powerful misuse their wealth and power

be injuring the less fortunate. The millionaires will not be more sacred to history than the clergy and the nobility.

Or has this age merely grown old and is now longing for rest? It has a strange life behind it. After loving with Byron and Heine, it has worked hard, produced many wonderful material results, genuine triumphs of science and invention, and, with great effort also works of art, particularly in music, which will survive many a coming century. Now it is exhausted, weary of life, tottering on crutches to the grave. Can we be astonished that it has grown childish and finds pleasure in an infant's prattle?

WHAT IS FIN DE SIECLE?

A meaningless phrase, not new, but lately suggestive of everything new and odd.

The phrase was evolutionized in the golden dust that whirls along the social avenues of the city of Notre Dame.

It has made its début in many of the leading European journals and magazines, and threatens to become the lable for all mental and artistic efforts of the coming years.

All, young or old, regardless of color, creed, and sex, who rush head over heels with new ideas towards the 20th century are, *hommes et femmes fin de siècle*.

Who are its leading representatives? Young authors and artists with an indescribable enthusiasm who are modest enough to give in that the importance of their own efforts is limited, but who assert without exception that they are the prophets of something (nobody knows what) glorious to come.

They are a set of strange young men, dreamers and visionaries—often morbid, broken-hearted, and poor, always nervous and impossible in society, whose first and last endeavor is to do something original, however odd and erroneous it may be. In great despair they rush about on the stage of life and yell: "My life, my life, for an original idea!"

Some are imbeciles but masters of technique, other philosophers but botchers.

And society; with luscious eyes, secretly nibbles away at their forbidden fruit, while the *fin de siècle* poets, who are disgusted with wearing a mask, are considered candidates for the insane asylums.

I will tell you some of their characteristics.

There is in them a confusion of suppressed ideas,

impulses, sardonic smiles, narcotic dreams, chronic mental catarrhs, ascetic efforts, godlike ideas, and the most absurd eccentricities and mannerisms which hurt Winkelmaniac esthetics like the electric light our eyes.

They indulge in an adoration of the nude in life and art, they are introducing a new religious worship, and make the boldest investigations into all sciences, and, in particular, into psycho-physiology.

And to what end? To wipe away the inconsistent theories of the past, to nail all great men of times gone by to the cross of judgment, to find out whether they are Christlike or like Dysmas and Stegas.

They will no longer allow systems of philosophy and great literary works to be developed from a certain fundamental idea, supposed "infallible" by one auguring mind.

They want everything—mud and diamonds, the slightest suggestion of a thought as well as sublime actions that benefit all mankind. They soar to the stars, and meditate on the buttonholes of their shirts. Not satisfied with their tangible existence, they want to trace their origin into the mystery of mysteries that are weaving in ever changing visions around the throne of infinite eternity.

How did they rise so suddenly! Oh, there have been mighty pioneers for the *fin de siècle* movement. Only to mention a few among the dead, Wagner, Schopenhauer, Walt Whitman, Taine, Rossetti, Darwin, Poe, Manet; and among the living, Jbsen, Tolstoj, Monet, Puvis de Chavannes, Zola, Nietzsche, etc. This mighty age began with Napoleon and Goethe and apparently will end with *fin de siècle* art and Utopian aspirations.

With gigantic strides we will pass through the coming centuries! The rough diamond of our globe will be cut, and recut, ground and polished, until it has the sublime transparency of Japanese crystal balls.

Fin de Siècle to work, develop men and women worthy of the 20th century!

Let us go from darkness to light, from light to darkness, and again, to light, to the light of lights!

CRITIC FIN DE SIECLE.

A TUESDAY EVENING AT STEPHANE MALLARME'S.

It was half past eight on a Tuesday evening when I entered 89, rue de Rome and climbed up to the fourth story, where Stéphane Mallarmé "the father of symbolism," holds his weekly receptions. He had invited me, sending me one of his exquisite